

Guidance series: Mentoring framework



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Mentoring Framework

If NHS organisations are to improve the integration of workforce, finance and service planning then it is important that individuals are provided with access to others who have more experience and knowledge in their chosen area. This will enable mentees to develop their knowledge and experiences and an understanding in their chosen area.

Whether your organisation wishes to develop a formal mentoring scheme or a more ad hoc informal approach NHS National Workforce Projects (NWP) has developed this *Mentoring Framework* to provide some key points that you might wish to consider before developing such a scheme.

“We learn by example and by direct experience because there are real limits to the adequacy of verbal instruction”

Malcolm Gladwell, *Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking*, 2005

This framework has been developed as a resource for organisations that may be considering offering mentoring opportunities and provides:

- Description of mentoring
- Advantages of mentoring for both the mentee* and mentor**
- Practical considerations
- Phases of the mentoring arrangement
- Things to be aware of.

*Mentee - the person being mentored

**Mentor - the person doing the mentoring



Section 1 - What is mentoring?

The Oxford English Dictionary definition of a mentor is

- An experienced and trusted adviser
- An experienced person in an organisation or institution who trains and counsels new employees or students.

Mentoring is a learning and development process which allows a mentee to discuss any issues or development needs they may have with a more experienced and senior mentor. As a result of the arrangement the mentee will learn and develop through reflective thinking, benefiting from the mentor's knowledge. The mentee may be looking to develop their understanding of the NHS, workforce, service or finance planning and a mentor would be able to help by encouraging their development.

There are no hard and fast rules to a mentoring arrangement, it is a flexible arrangement between the mentee and the mentor, determined by the individuals involved. In this respect mentoring differs from other learning and development initiatives such as job shadowing and training courses.

It is often beneficial for the mentor to be outside the mentee's line management arrangements so that the mentee is able to discuss any work related issues they may have and the mentor is able to remain objective. This may be a cross team, cross organisational or cross sector arrangement. Mentors will be more experienced in workforce, finance or service planning and be operating at a more strategic level.

Mentoring is self directed learning therefore the mentee is responsible for driving the agenda to ensure that they get what they need from the arrangement. The mentee sets the topics of conversation and how often they meet with the mentor.



Within the safe and supportive environment, a mentor can:

- Support the mentee
- Challenge the mentee's assumptions
- Help set development goals and objectives
- Encourage the mentee to reflect on their experiences and prompt self directed learning.

Section 2 - Why choose mentoring?

Mentoring can take place when:

- An individual is taking on a new role within an organisation
- An individual is new to the team, the organisation or the sector
- An individual would like to increase their knowledge in a specific area.

A mentoring arrangement can enable the mentee to increase their knowledge and understanding of a chosen area such as workforce, finance or service planning and of how NHS and social care organisations operate.

A mentoring arrangement requires time commitment from both the mentee and mentor, therefore line management and organisational support is required to ensure this happens. Successful mentorship programmes have senior management buy in and a senior champion within the organisation.



Section 3 - Mentoring and Coaching

It is often easy to confuse mentoring with coaching. The table below¹ details these differences.

Mentoring	Coaching
Focus on progress	Focus on task
Usually longer term - sometimes for life	Usually short term
Intuitive feedback	Explicit feedback
Develops capabilities	Develops skills
Driven by mentee/learner	Driven by coach
Helps you to work it out yourself	Shows you where you went wrong

Section 4 - What are the benefits of mentoring?

Organisational benefits

- Mentoring provides learning and development opportunities for staff, both as a mentee and a mentor
- Increased learning and development opportunities will increase staff satisfaction and retention
- Mentoring encourages the sharing of good practice and learning within and across organisations
- Mentoring encourages a culture of sharing and openness, this can benefit organisational development
- Mentoring arrangements often provide a higher level of learning, as opposed to external training courses, at less cost

¹ Clutterbuck , D & Sweeny, J, Coaching and Mentoring, published on www.clutterbuckassociates.com



- Mentoring facilitates the development of networks across teams and organisations
- Mentoring encourages self directed learning and enables individuals to drive their development.

Mentee benefits

- Personal development
- Faster career progression and opportunities to explore alternative routes
- Increased self confidence and self esteem
- Increased capability
- An opportunity to develop skills in self directed learning
- Access to a supportive environment to test ideas
- Access to the mentor's knowledge, skills and experience
- Opportunities to develop networks.

Mentor benefits

- Personal development
- The mentee may often lead the mentor to insights of their own
- Personal satisfaction
- Opportunities to improve networks with other areas of the organisation or with new organisations.



Section 5 - What does a good mentoring relationship look like?

A formalised mentoring framework can facilitate a successful mentoring programme by ensuring that there is organisational support for the framework and that there are processes in place to manage it.

A good mentoring framework:

- **Begins with a clear rationale and purpose**
Both the mentor and mentee need to agree the ground rules for the arrangement, this may be called contracting. The contract may include such details as how often meetings will take place and processes for reviewing the arrangement
- **Has a structure to administer the programme and a senior management champion**
A full mentorship programme may require administration support to match mentor profiles to the requirements of the mentees. Senior management support of a mentoring programme will ensure that it is implemented within an organisation
- **Has a process for selection of mentors and mentees**
It is important to match a mentor with the most appropriate competences and knowledge to the mentee's development needs
- **Has a process for training of mentors**
All mentors should have the relevant competences and depth of knowledge and experience to enable the mentee to benefit from the experience. If training is required this should be sourced and made available to potential mentors
- **Evaluates the mentoring relationships**
Evaluation of the individual mentoring relationships is necessary to ensure that the original objectives set out in the contracting stages have been achieved.



Section 6 - Phases of the mentoring arrangement

1. **Contracting** - agreeing the ground rules for the arrangement
2. **Agreement of objectives** - what does the mentee want from the arrangement?
3. **Review** - is the arrangement working?
4. **Closure** - the objectives have been met and the arrangement ends.

Section 7 - What makes a good mentor?

A good mentor, regardless of their role, will be able to use their competences, skills, experience and knowledge to suit the mentee. David Clutterbuck has identified 10 mentor competences² which you may find useful. These competences are generic as the mentors will differ in terms of their role, organisation, experience and knowledge.

1. Self awareness - understanding self, role and organisation
2. Behavioural awareness - understanding others, their role and organisation
3. Business or professional savvy - with a clear understanding of how health and social care systems operate
4. Sense of proportion/good humour
5. Communication competence
 - Listening
 - Observing
 - Parallel processing (analysing what the other person has said, processing it and preparing a response)
 - Projecting - crafting words and their emotional 'wrapping' in a manner appropriate for the situation and the recipient(s)

² Clutterbuck, D, Developing Mentor Competences published on <http://www.clutterbuckassociates.com>, 2005



- Observing as projector - being open to the visual and other non verbal signals, as clues to what the recipient is hearing/ understanding; adapting tone, volume, pace and language appropriately
 - Exiting - concluding a dialogue or segment of dialogue with clarity and alignment of understanding (ensuring message received in both directions).
6. Conceptual modelling - drawing on a portfolio of models from their own experience to help the mentee learn
 7. Commitment to their own continued learning
 8. Strong interest in developing others
 9. Building and maintaining a rapport/relationship management
 10. Goal clarity.

Further information on these competences, can be found on David Clutterbuck's website www.clutterbuckassociates.com.

Section 8 - Things to be aware of

There are times when mentoring arrangements do not go to plan. Below are some of the things to be aware of:

- **Unequal expectations of the arrangement**
This will mean that objectives are not met and this should be addressed at the contracting stage to ensure that both parties have clear expectations
- **External interference on the arrangement**
Organisational and line manager support is required to ensure this doesn't happen. If the arrangement is not seen as a legitimate learning and development initiative the arrangement will not work



- Tension arising between the mentor and mentee around status, rank and authority.

Both the mentor and mentee must have trust and respect for each other. Correct matching of mentee and mentor is required to avoid this. Again, this can be discussed at the contracting stage

- Common shifts in the relationship caused by changes in people and geography

Mentoring works best when it takes place face to face however, it is possible for mentoring arrangements to take place by telephone or email where necessary as a result of changes in circumstance

- The time commitment required

Both parties need to put time aside for their mentoring commitments. This needs to be clear at the outset for both potential mentors and mentees to ensure they are fully aware of the requirements.

Useful resources/links

www.coachingnetwork.org.uk

www.mentoring.org

www.managementhelp.org/guiding/mentrng/mentrng.htm

www.exemplas.com/individuals/leadership_management/services_mentors_forum.asp

www.clutterbuckassociates.com/content/Company/Home.aspx

Some organisations have local mentor schemes. Please check for further information and guidance.



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